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ABSTRACT

A summary is presented of findings concerning occupational mobility based on data obtained in a supplement to the January 1973 Current Population Survey, conducted by the Bureau of the Census. Statistical data is offered in three tables, comparing occupational mobility between January 1972 and January 1973 of employed persons over 18: (1) by age and sex; (2) by age, sex, and race; and (3) by occupation and sex. About six million persons employed in January 1973 were in different occupations from those in which they were working in January 1972. Nine percent of the men and about eight percent of the women employed at both dates changed occupations over this period. The demographic characteristic most closely associated with mobility was age of worker, though occupation and other characteristics also were important. (Author/AJ)

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SUMMARY
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR Bureau of Labor Statistics
SPECIAL LABOR FORCE REPORT

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Occupational Mobility of Employed Workers, January 1973

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About 6 million persons employed in January 1973 were in different occupations from those in which they were working in January 1972. Nine percent of the men and about 8 percent of the women employed at both dates changed occupations over this period (table 1). Statistically, occupational mobility rates were not significantly different among Negro men, white men, and white women, around 9 percent, while the rate was lower for Negro women, 6.2 percent (table 2). These rates are based on employed workers 18 years old and over and not in school.

The demographic characteristic most closely associated with mobility was age of worker, though occupation and other characteristics also were important. As age of worker increased, occupational mobility rates generally declined, regardless of sex or race, and over 70 percent of all occupational changes were among workers under age 35, even though such workers were less than 40 percent of the employed at both dates.

Single workers, both men and women, were more occupationally mobile than those in any other marital status. For example, single men had an overall mobility rate of 17.0, compared to a rate of 7.8 for married men with spouse present, and a rate of 9.9 for those of other marital status. The variation by marital status largely reflected the lower average age of single workers, since occupational mobility rates were not consistently higher for single than for other persons of the same age group.

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In terms of education and among men and women, occupational mobility rates were at a maximum for persons with 1 to 3 years of college, and they were at a minimum for persons with 8 years of schooling or less. Among men, those with 4 years or more of college had the second lowest rates, while among women it was the group with 1 to 3 years of high school. The low mobility of persons with little formal education was largely a function of their higher average age, whereas the relatively low mobility of college graduates probably reflected their extensive education, which qualifies them for high-paying occupations from which they are reluctant to move.

Mobility patterns by occupation in January 1973 were somewhat similar to the mobility patterns by education, in that specialized occupations requiring large investments in training time, such as professionals and managers, had rather low rates. The relationship between amount of training and mobility was more consistent, however, by occupation than by education; generally, the less training an occupation required, the higher was its mobility rate. Among men, for example, nonfarm laborers had the highest mobility rate, 15.5 percent, with operatives, sales workers, and service workers also experiencing above average rates (table 3).

Occupational mobility rates reflect in-movement to an occupation. As might be expected, farmers were the least occupationally mobile of the men, at 1.9 percent. Among the reasons for low mobility into farming are the heavy required investments in land and machinery, and a long-term increase in agricultural productivity which has led to a substantial decline in agricultural manpower requirements. Among women, the range of mobility rates by occupation was from 2.1 to 13.5, with a distribution similar to that of the men.

Most movement tended to occur either within broad occupational groups or between closely related ones. Many men, for example, transferred from one occupation in the operative group to another, and many women moved from one clerical occupation to another. Men also recorded considerable movement in both directions between craft and operative occupations. There was more movement among men from blue-collar to white-collar occupations than from white-collar to blue-collar ones. Of the men in white-collar occupations in January 1973 who had changed occupations over the year, 33 percent came from blue-collar occupations. Among those in blue-collar occupations in January 1973 who had changed occupations over the year, only about 19 percent had come from white-collar occupations.

A previous occupational mobility survey related to changes between January 1965 and January 1966, when economic conditions were somewhat similar to those between January 1972 and January 1973. The degree of occupational mobility in 1972 was at about the same level for Negro women as in 1965. It was lower for Negro men (9.5 percent as compared to 12.5 percent), and there is some evidence that it was lower for white men (8.9 percent as compared to 9.5 percent). Among white women, however, occupational mobility was higher (8.5 percent as compared to 6.7 percent), largely reflecting higher rates among women aged 20 to 34, as well as the greater number of women in this age group.

These findings are based upon data obtained in a supplement to the January 1973 Current Population Survey, conducted for the Bureau of Labor Statistics by the Bureau of the Census. Additional information will appear in a forthcoming issue of the Monthly Labor Review.

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Table 1. Occupational mobility between January 1972 and January 1973 of employed persons, by age and sex, January 1973

(Numbers in thousands)

Age	Men		Women	
	Number employed in January 1973 and also in January 1972	Occupational mobility rate 1/	Number employed in January 1973 and also in January 1972	Occupational mobility rate 1/
Total, 18 years old and over, not in school	43,244	9.0	24,375	8.2
18 and 19 years	917	37.3	665	36.2
20 to 24 years	4,271	24.9	3,431	18.7
25 to 34 years	10,926	12.4	5,168	9.9
35 to 44 years	9,477	6.2	4,968	6.3
45 to 54 years	9,630	3.5	5,508	3.3
55 to 64 years	6,420	2.6	3,768	2.4
65 years and over	1,603	1.7	867	2.5

1/ Percent of persons employed in both January 1972 and January 1973 who had a different occupation in January 1973.

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Table 3. Occupational mobility rates 1/ between January 1972 and January 1973 of employed persons, by occupation and sex, January 1973

Occupation in January 1973	Men	Women
Total, 18 years old and over, not in school	9.0	8.2
Professional, technical, and kindred workers	5.4	5.6
Managers and administrators, except farm	7.6	7.4
Sales workers	11.4	9.1
Clerical and kindred workers	9.3	9.3
Craft and kindred workers	8.0	9.7
Operatives, except transport	13.4	9.7
Transport equipment operatives	9.4	7.8
Laborers, except farm	15.5	13.5
Private household workers	(2/)	6.3
Service workers, except private household	10.7	7.4
Farmers and farm managers	1.9	(2/)
Farm laborers and supervisors	6.6	2.1

1/ Percent of persons employed in both January 1972 and January 1973 who had a different occupation in January 1973.

2/ Rate not shown where base is less than 75,000.

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Table 2. Occupational mobility rates 1/ between January 1972 and January 1973 of employed persons, by age, sex, and race, January 1973

Age	White		Negro and other races	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Total, 18 years old and over, not in school	8.9	8.5	9.5	6.2
18 and 19 years	38.3	36.2	27.9	(2/)
20 to 24 years	24.9	19.4	25.6	12.4
25 to 34 years	12.4	10.3	12.3	8.0
35 to 44 years	6.2	6.6	6.4	4.1
45 to 54 years	3.6	3.4	3.2	2.8
55 to 64 years	2.6	2.2	2.8	4.0
65 years and over	1.7	2.8	1.5	-

1/ Percent of persons employed in both January 1972 and January 1973 who had a different occupation in January 1973.

2/ Rate not shown where base is less than 75,000.